

## Needle Exchange Medical Clinic

Quality health care for drug injectors

1511 2nd Avenue  
Downtown Seattle, between Pike and Pine



### Specializing in **abscess care** and:

- ◆ Other injection-related infections
- ◆ Screening for HIV and hepatitis
- ◆ Colds and respiratory infections
- ◆ TB screening
- ◆ Personal health questions



Jim



Yvonne

Open Monday - Friday,  
1:30 - 4:30 pm  
Walk-ins welcome.

No insurance?  
No problem.

Dedicated medical staff  
who care.



Alternative  
formats  
available

Sponsored by  
**Pioneer Square Medical Clinic**  
Health Care for the Homeless  
and



**Public Health**  
Seattle & King County

HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

[www.metrokc.gov/health/apu](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/apu)



# To the POINT

## Expanded Syringe Access

Pharmacies and Public Health partnering to prevent disease transmission

### Pharmacies preventing disease

100 King County retail pharmacies have signed up to participate in a Public Health program to prevent the transmission of HIV, hepatitis and other medical problems that stem from injection drug use.

Partnered pharmacies voluntarily sell new, sterile syringes without questions and without prescriptions to people who need them, including drug users. They also provide information about syringe disposal, HIV and hepatitis testing, the benefits of drug treatment and how to access it. Nearly a third of the pharmacies in King County are now participating.

"These pharmacies are helping Public Health prevent new blood-borne infections, reduce the consequences of injection drug use and facilitate entry into drug and alcohol treatment," said Dr. Alonzo Plough, Director of Public Health. "Together, we are working to protect the health of all King County residents and communities."

In 2002, Washington State passed a new law permitting pharmacies to sell syringes without penalty and allowing individuals over the age of 18 to possess up to ten sterile syringes.

Research conducted by Public Health and the University of Washington revealed strong support among pharmacists for programs to reduce transmission of blood-borne pathogens. Seattle pharmacies that sell syringes increased from 48% in 1996 to 65% in 2003.

To locate pharmacies already signed on as partners in this disease prevention program, visit:  
[www.metrokc.gov/health/apu/harmred/pharmacies.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/apu/harmred/pharmacies.htm).

### Facts and stats

Public Health - Seattle & King County conducts a risk behavior survey of injection drug users (IDU) arrested and booked into the King County Correctional Facilities. The survey revealed that IDU within Seattle overwhelmingly use Needle Exchange to obtain new, sterile syringes, though many use pharmacies. IDU in the suburbs rely more on pharmacies to access sterile syringes.

#### Source of new sterile syringes in the last 6 months

##### Any use of needle exchange:

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Seattle jail                   | 74% |
| Regional Justice Center (Kent) | 33% |
| Total                          | 64% |

##### Any use of pharmacy:

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Seattle jail                   | 43% |
| Regional Justice Center (Kent) | 59% |
| Total                          | 47% |

- ◆ Nationally, IDU make up 31% of all AIDS cases. This compares to 16% in King County.
- ◆ There are about 590 (4%) HIV infections among the estimated 15,000 King County residents who's primary risk is injection drug use.
- ◆ Locally, injection drug use accounts for 16% of HIV infections among males. Among women, injection drug use or having sex with an IDU accounts for 44% of HIV infections.
- ◆ IDU who are in drug treatment are at lower risk for HIV than other injectors.
- ◆ HIV prevalence is relatively low in King County IDU. However, a high proportion show evidence of previous exposure to hepatitis C (80%) and hepatitis B (70%).

#### Public Health's goals are to:

- ◆ Prevent new blood-borne infections.
- ◆ Facilitate entry into drug/alcohol treatment.
- ◆ Reduce the negative consequences of injection drug use.

Thank you for assisting Public Health in achieving these goals.

If you are not already a Public Health partner, contact Robert Marks, program coordinator, at (206) 205-5510 or [robert.marks@metrokc.gov](mailto:robert.marks@metrokc.gov) to sign on or to find out more.

With your help, we can protect the health of all King County residents and communities.

# Where can patients dispose of syringes?

Some pharmacies sell sharps containers that can be returned for disposal. Some pharmacies only sell puncture resistant containers but do not take them back. If your pharmacy does not accept syringes for disposal, patients have several other options in Seattle & King County for disposing of used sharps:

- ◆ Some **doctors offices**. Patients can inquire with their health provider to see if they can drop off their container there.
- ◆ All **Public Health clinics**.
- ◆ Secure, steel, outdoor **syringe drop boxes** are available 24 hours a day (locations are listed below).
- ◆ **Needle Exchanges** offer free sharps containers and accept used syringes for disposal.
- ◆ **Disposal Stations** in Seattle. Sharps must be placed in a labeled, puncture resistant container with a tight fitting lid. Locations are:
  - ◆ North 34th St. and Carr Place North (Fremont area)
  - ◆ 2nd Ave. South and South Kenyon St. (South Park area)

To locate a nearby Public Health clinic or Needle Exchange, call (206) 205-7837(STDS) or 1-800-678-1595.

Seattle and King County have different syringe disposal regulations:

**In Seattle:** Individuals can drop off containers of used sharps at a Public Health Clinic, syringe drop box, recycling and disposal station or a local Needle Exchange. If the person is unable to bring the containers to a drop off or exchange site, they could ask a friend or relative to take the containers to a drop/exchange site.

**Outside of Seattle and within King County:** Individuals can put sharps into the garbage if the sharps are placed in puncture resistant containers with tight fitting lids and labeled, “SHARPS, DO NOT RECYCLE”. Biohazard labels are available at drop off and exchange sites.



**Syringe drop boxes** are available 24 hours a day at the following locations:

- ◆ **North Public Health Center**  
10501 Meridian Avenue N Seattle
- ◆ **Eastgate Public Health Center**  
14350 SE Eastgate Way Bellevue
- ◆ **White Center Public Health Center**  
10821 8th Avenue SW Seattle
- ◆ **Auburn Public Health Center**  
20 Auburn Avenue Auburn
- ◆ **Downtown Public Health Center**  
2124 4th Avenue Seattle
- ◆ **Northshore Public Health Center**  
10808 NE 145th Street Bothell
- ◆ **Federal Way Public Health Center**  
33431 13th Place S Federal Way
- ◆ **Renton Public Health Center**  
3001 NE 4th Street Renton
- ◆ **Columbia Health Center**  
4400 37th Avenue S Seattle
- ◆ **Planned Parenthood of Western WA**  
2001 E Madison Street Seattle
- ◆ **Greenwood Medical Clinic**  
415 N 85th Avenue Seattle
- ◆ **Lifelong AIDS Alliance**  
1002 E Seneca Street Seattle

# What about treatment?

Long-term opiate use frequently results in permanent changes in brain chemistry. For these people, replacement treatment with a longer-acting opiate such as methadone combined with psycho-social counseling has proven most successful. Unfortunately, demand for methadone treatment in King County, as well as all of Washington State, far exceeds availability. There are only 2,800 licensed methadone treatment slots for the estimated 12,000 heroin injectors who reside in King County. About half of these slots are publicly supported.

As of the end of February, 690 people were waitlisted for methadone treatment in King County. Wait times are typically 18-24 months. One goal of the Expanded Syringe Access Campaign is to assure that those who are waiting to get into treatment have access to sterile injecting equipment while they wait.

There are several efforts to expand access to methadone treatment currently underway in Washington State. A recent study published by Washington State DSHS found that the cost offset of medical, mental health and long-term care relative to the cost for providing chemical dependency treatment is substantial for clients addicted to opiates, regardless of type of treatment. The study identified \$732 worth of savings per person per month for methadone treatment and \$541 per person per month for non-methadone treatment. A University of Washington study compared criminal activity and service utilization during treatment to the 12 months prior to treatment for 962 patients discharged from methadone treatment in 2002. In addition to substantial reductions in utilization of medical services, UW researchers found a 63-81% reduction in arrests and a 22% increase in employment.

Expansion of methadone treatment was prioritized by King County and the City of Seattle for the 2004 state legislative agenda. While the effort this budget year did not prove successful, the Drug Policy Project, coordinated by the King County Bar Association and including representation from the Washington State Pharmacy Association, plans to re-introduce expansion legislation in 2005. For more information on efforts to increase access to drug treatment in Washington State, visit <http://www.kcba.org/druglaw/index.html> or contact Jeff Rochon, Director of Pharmacy Care Services, WA State Pharmacy Association, [jrochon@wsparx.org](mailto:jrochon@wsparx.org) , 425-228-7171 ext 12.

*“We are pleased to play an important role in enhancing health care for our patients and the communities we serve.”*

Sepideh Soleimanpour,  
Walgreens District Pharmacy  
Supervisor of 13 participating Walgreens

*“Selling syringes is good customer relations. Participating in this program has been a positive experience for everyone. Public Health made it hassle free and provided helpful information.”*

KC Sneed,  
Pharmacy Manager  
Albertson's Food & Drug

*“When the Needle Exchange told me I could buy syringes at a pharmacy without a prescription or hassle, I didn't believe them. But when I couldn't make it to the exchange one night, I went to the pharmacy on the list and they sold me some points...no problem. No questions and no attitude. I really appreciated that 'cause even though I use drugs, I really don't want to reuse my needles, get HIV, or give my hepatitis C to anyone else. They were really cool about it.”*

Needle Exchange  
Customer

